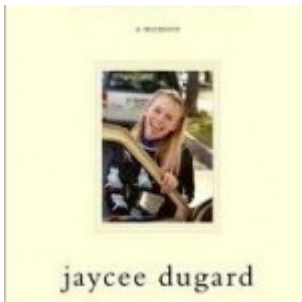


Dugard memoir captures a life of captivity

By Kathryn Reed

Some books I don't want to read, but I know should. Such was the case with "A Stolen Life" – Jaycee Lee Dugard's memoir.



It was also one of those books that I wanted to be done with fast. Selfishly, I just didn't want Dugard's 18-year ordeal to linger long on my nightstand. Though, truth be told, I have had it for more than a year. I just needed to be ready to read it. And when I was, I read it fast.

I wasn't living in South Lake Tahoe when Dugard, who was 11 at the time, was snatched from a school bus stop in Meyers. But I was here in 2009 when word came she had been found – alive – living in Antioch (just three hours away) and had given birth to children who were fathered by her kidnapper-rapist.

The book is worth reading no matter how many news accounts you've read.

It would make for an interesting high school or college level project – perhaps in an English, psychology, or criminal justice class. It is definitely not a book to be read by all ages.

I was surprised that the emotion I was left with at the end of the 273 pages was disbelief. Still, I cannot believe Dugard's will to live. I don't know how she endured the endless sexual, emotional and verbal abuse.

She writes about how she got through it all. Her thoughts. Her mindset. Her emotions.

It's a gritty book. It's an honest book. It will make you angry and sad. But in the end I was just amazed by this woman's journey from innocent child to bruised woman. Battered, yes, but nowhere near broken.

That is what is so remarkable – that at least when the book came out in 2011 – is that Dugard was well on the road to recovery.

In some ways I would like to read the next chapter, so to speak, of her life. And another side of me hopes she goes on to live a life without a spotlight on her or any member of her family.